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ABSTRACT

The thesis of this paper was to question the validity of a goal of integration achieved through the elimination of differences. In the course of structured interviews with mothers enrolling their children for the first time in Operation Exodus, a black administered and financed school busing program in Boston, a majority of respondents indicated they were busing their children out of the ghetto to obtain quality education, but not necessarily integrated education. In order to clarify the parents' position as to the value of quality and integrated education, the parents were re-interviewed at the beginning of the second year of busing for their children and asked if they would prefer that their children attend a quality school in their neighborhood if such a school could be established. Although these parents still asserted that a desire for integrated education played in the decision to bus, they endorsed the concept of quality schooling within the black community to a greater degree than the parents of new enrollees in the bussing program. For many black parents, quality education and integrated education represented a conflict in values. In relation to this finding, the issue of matching environments to persons, the consequences of mismatch, and one example of a strategy based on awareness of mismatch are discussed. (Author/AM)

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Quality Education and Integrated Education:

A Conflict of Values[1]

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In the background notes elaborating the theme of this conference on values and multi-ethnic education, the proposition was advanced that there exists in our culture a shared value system dedicated to the elimination of ethnic differences and the creation of a more completely integrated society. The dilemma as posed to educators was that of deciding whether programs tailored to "meet individual needs" were consonant with this expressed goal. The thesis of this paper is to lay open to question the validity of a goal of integration achieved through the elimination of differences. Our society, conceived of as a "melting pot", was an idea more in keeping with the nineteenth century values than with the technology of the twentieth century. The more appropriate model for contemporary society may be that of a machine with parts, differentiated in form and function, working in productive interrelation with one another. No implication is intended that educating children for adult life in a pluralistic society is any easier than educating them within an assimilationist framework. But the difference in goals carries important implications for differences in means. In particular, one action outcome of the difference in goals is the question of the locus of the change. When the goal is that of educating children so as to achieve a "more completely integrated society," it is the child whose background and life style are divergent from the presumed mainstream values who must change. When the goal is that of educating children while preserving their cultural diversity, the target of change is by no means as predetermined. Much of the current dissension between educators and concerned parents revolves around the issue of who is to do the changing. When the child and school don't seem to fit each other, it has been assumed that the child must change. Since we require children to attend school, most children respond to the pressure to change or else. The privilege of seeking a better match between their child and a school has been reserved for the rich. Thus, the term "problem child" has a much more familiar ring than "problem school." We shall return to a discussion of the fit between child and school environment later. In the meantime, let us consider a value conflict relevant to the issue of change and fit that is becoming daily more polarized in the urban centers of our country.

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What is quality education for any child? And particularly what is quality education for the child whose family background and community environment are different from the middle-class mainstream values projected by the schools he attends? What of teachers' expectations when they view difference as inferiority? How can school personnel teach effectively in the face of a value conflict made manifest under the banner of community control?

Quality Integrated Education Through Bussing

These questions are by no means novel but they presented themselves to me anew in research on racial school integration. A close look at the experiences of black parents in a bussing program suggested that a conflict between integrated education as an end in itself and new definitions of quality education was emerging. In collaboration with a black-administered and black-financed school bussing program in Boston, known as Operation Exodus, James Teele and I studied the experiences of the black families involved in integrated education in predominantly white schools in Boston. As described in earlier accounts (Teele, Jackson and Mayo, 1967; Teele and Mayo, 1969), the program presented a particularly crucial opportunity to learn about the values influencing parents involved in a bussing program in that these children were being bussed outside the ghetto but within the same school system. As far as the quality of the education offered, all schools were governed ostensibly by uniform curriculum and personnel policies. Parents were faced therefore with an educational decision that tapped values directed at quality education in combination with or in contrast to integrated education. Part of the general confusion about ends and means in the minds of both parents and educators stems from the absence of evidence bearing on quality education for minority group children independent of integrated education. Not only is there little or no evidence on hand but it is not possible at present to obtain such information since no quality, non-integrated schools exist that sufficiently are comparable in size, staffing, funding or pupil characteristics to quality integrated schools to permit valid comparisons of the effects of quality and integration on the pupils (Herriot and St. John, 1966).

It was therefore with particular interest that we chose to explore the values expressed by parents participating in the bussing program. The opinions expressed were the thoughtful products of serious decisions since the program was one demanding a major effort and commitment on the part of the parents involved and the black community. In the course of structured interviews with mothers enrolling their children for the first time, an overwhelming number of respondents indicated that they were bussing their children out of the ghetto to obtain a quality education. More specifically, they mentioned overcrowding, lack of individual attention, teacher turnover and rundown facilities among the aspects of ghetto schools that led them to seek places for their children in the predominantly white schools within the system. In response to the open-ended question, "Why are you bussing your child?", 86 percent of 1965 interviewees and 89 percent of 1966 respondents gave answers reflecting interest only in the quality of education that would be offered their children. Not a single participant

interviewed indicated that having his child attend an integrated school was an explicit goal in bussing and a mere 7 and 3 percent each year gave any indication that they were deliberately seeking the quality education in an integrated setting. In part because of our speculations about the meaning of these replies to an open-ended question (Teele, Jackson and Mayo, 1967), an explicit question about quality education and integrated education as separable issues was asked of those enrolling their children for the first time in 1966. Respondents were asked to rate (not at all, a little, some, or a lot) the extent to which both wanting their child to attend an integrated school and wanting him to obtain the best education played a part in their decision to bus. This question was designed to ask the parent to consider both issues explicitly and to indicate the extent to which each played a part in the decision. The results again affirmed that the quality education was by far the predominant theme in the parental values expressed. All the parents who responded (96.2 percent) indicated that they were influenced "a lot" by the desire to obtain a quality education for their children. It is quite clear that whether open-ended or structured questions are asked, of new enrollees in two different years, or of respondents returning for a second year in the bussing program, the primary goal expressed was that of obtaining a quality education. The replies dealing with the degree to which the bussing decision was based on seeking education in an integrated school were by no means as readily interpretable. Parental responses were distributed almost evenly among the response alternatives with 19 percent stating that they were "not at all" influenced by the integrationist goal and 31 percent stating that they were influenced "a lot" by this value. The variety of viewpoints about this value conflict is further documented by the fact that while only 4 percent failed to reply to the quality education ratings, 18 percent gave no response to the integration question.

Preference for Quality Education

In a further attempt to clarify the tangled values of quality education and integrated education, the 1966 interview asked parents if they would prefer that their child attend a quality school in the ghetto if such a school could be built. Respondents included both those enrolling their children in the bussing program for the first time (N=78) and a small sample of those whose children were being bussed for the second year (N=27). This latter group was included in the second year interviewing because of our speculations concerning the meaning of some of the first-year findings. At that time, in the course of a single interview, parents were asked their reasons for bussing and answered as indicated above mainly in terms of seeking a better education for their children. They were also asked near the end of the interview the degree to which they thought their child had benefited from attending an integrated school. At that point, 94 percent of the mothers said that they felt their children were benefiting from attending an integrated school. As indicated in our report at the time, this particular question was ambiguous and confounded the "benefits" of quality and integrated education, albeit in the same way as the confounding of these elements was actually experienced by the child being bussed. But the responses to that question led us to conclude that it did seem "that

these mothers passed up an opportunity to disavow the advantages of integration (Teele, Jackson and Mayo, 1967, p. 26)." This interpretation was supported further by the fact that those who reported that their children had encountered the least prejudice in the course of the school year were the respondents most likely to say that their children had benefited greatly from attending an integrated school. At the time, these findings were interpreted within a dissonance framework to the effect that parents initially sent their children out of the ghetto to better their educational opportunities but did so in grave apprehension of the treatment their children would receive. For those whose children then not only began to get a quality education but also received better than expected treatment from teachers, peers and new schoolmates, parental attitudes shifted in the direction of favoring the integration as well as quality elements present in the situation. That interpretation was advanced very tentatively and therefore led in the second year of interviewing, not only to the more structured questions described above but also the inclusion of the small re-interview sample of parents bussing their children for the second year in order to see whether the tentative assumptions would be confirmed. The original interpretations were based on data generated from two questions early and late in a single-point-in-time interview and extrapolated to suggest actual process over time. It was reasoned that the child's experience in the integrated school, as reviewed for an hour by parent and interviewer, created or reinforced a value for integrated education.

In some respects, the sample of parents reinterviewed in the second year of bussing did not differ from the replies given during either year of interviewing by parents of first-enrollees. In the open-ended question about the reason for bussing, they again gave the higher caliber of the education anticipated as the basis of their decision. When asked to rate explicitly the degree to which quality education as separate from integrated education influenced their decision, their responses again corresponded to those of first-enrollees. They were influenced overwhelmingly by the desire to find better education and they differed among themselves concerning the extent to which integration as a value influenced their decision. What is important to note about these ratings, however, is that they present an arbitrary distinction that the parent is well aware does not reflect the state of urban schools as they are; the fact is that a parent who wants a quality education for his children must seek it in an integrated school. It was in keen realization of this point that a question was included to elicit the parents' preference "if the School Board could build a quality school in Roxbury...". Even this question does not pose a real issue on a level with that of the bussing decision itself and many parents amplified their replies with comments indicating their skepticism concerning the likelihood of such an occurrence. Nonetheless, it was in response to this question that the reinterview group of parents bussing for the second year differed most from first-enrollees. A majority of both groups said they would prefer to send their child to a quality school in the ghetto but this majority increased sharply with the two year veterans of bussing. Where 67 percent of the first enrollees would prefer the quality school in the black community, 85 percent of the veterans of the bussing program would choose the black quality school for their child. It became apparent from these findings that the assumptions made by us a year earlier based on

comparable responses to questions about the reasons for bussing and the benefits found in the integrated school were unwarranted. Although re-interviewed parents still asserted that a desire for an integrated education played some part in their decision to bus, they now, far more than new enrollees with similar values in other respects, endorsed the concept of a quality school within the black community.

At first glance, this might be taken merely as a reflection of the increasing influence of a black consciousness and a move toward greater control of schools by the black community. While such an influence is unqestionably present, it does not explain the findings described above, for such a general ideological climate in the community should have influenced both new and old enrollees in 1966. The decisive factor that may have made the latter more determined advocates of the quality school in the black community likely was the very experience with the white school itself. Since the bussing in this particular program took place within the same school system, veterans of one year's experience may have come to feel that the objective advantages of the white schools in terms of class size, availability of books and equipment, teacher characteristics and such were not sufficient either to outweigh the considerable family effort required to bus or to obtain what the parents expect a quality education to be. Black parents are concluding that the predominantly white schools in urban school systems provide their white pupils with an education that is only minimally better than that received within the ghetto and that the degree of difference is not worth the major personal and group effort that a black-run and black-financed program such as Operation Exodus entails. In the words of Peter Schrag:

> In some circles school integration is almost a dead issue, a bitter residue of yesterday's battles that will not be raised again. There have been few vocal demands for large-scale integration in the past two years, and almost no recent boycotts and demonstrations—except those directed to neighborhood control of segregated schools. In almost all the cities where Negroes constitute a significant proportion of the population the strategists are beginning to discuss not integration, not moral persuasion, but the capture of political institutions...as the best way of achieving recognition and power (Schrag, 1967, p. 172).

The shift in interest from seeking admission of black children to white schools to that of obtaining local power to make the schools that serve minority populations more effective may be seen as a reflection of separating the values of quality education and integrated education. These values have been bound so inextricably together by the fact that power over educational policy in urban areas has rested largely in the hands of the white, middle-class majority. Few black parents have ever believed that black children needed the presence of white children in order to learn; what they have always previously assumed was that black children needed the presence of white children in their classrooms in order to have adequate facilities, concerned and able teachers and the other accoutrements that

are presumed to be the earmarks of a quality education. This belief is being put to the test in recent efforts by black communities in Northern cities to gain control of their local schools. It is in this sense that for many black parents quality education and integrated education represent a conflict in values.

The Cultural Price of Personal Academic Success

A recent Office of Education report (Coleman et al., 1966) has been widely cited as offering evidence (to the consternation of some) that school characteristics bear less relation to a verbal ability measure of pupil achievement than do variables associated with family background. This finding has been used in some quarters as justification for reducing educational development and expenditures. What is sometime missed in the Coleman report is the finding that verbal "achievement of minority pupils depends more on the schools they attend than does the achievement of majority pupils (Coleman et al., 1966, p. 22)." The three variables within school characteristics that were singled out for comment in the report are special facilities such as laboratories, quality of teachers and the student body composition. The schools attended by minority group children were found to be deficient in all three respects. The third characteristic, that of student body composition, has been identified in the report and by numerous commentators thereafter as supporting school integration. The reasoning is based on the assumption that more white pupils come from homes "strongly and effectively supportive of education" and that white children therefore constitute the most easily available pool of class mates with educational aspirations in which to place minority group children. This conclusion is open to question on two grounds. Fifteen years after the Supreme Court Decision ruling against school segregation, resistance to integrated education is so widespread as to lay open to serious doubt whether white pupils are in fact available to provide the value climate within which the Coleman report suggests that minority children achieve better. Secondly, the growing sense of race pride in minority populations, especially where attempts to control their own communities begin to meet with success, presents a better promise of creating a climate supportive of education in homes and classrooms. For while the Coleman report found school factors overall to be weaker than many had expected, it found some individual pupil characteristics stronger than all the school factors put together. One such factor was the extent to which an individual feels that he has some control over his own destiny. While the sense of control was found to be related to achievement for all children in the early grades, with increasing age, it grew to be a dominant factor in the achievement of black students. The Coleman report suggested that:

> ...for many disadvantaged children, a major obstacle to achievement may arise from the very way they confront the environment. Having experienced an unresponsive environment, the virtues of hard work, of diligent and extended effort toward achievement appear to such a child unlikely to be rewarding. As a consequence, he is likely merely to "adjust" to his environment, finding satisfaction in passive pursuits (Coleman et al., 1966, p. 321).

The statement might describe the obstacle to achievement equally appropriately as the way in which the environment confronts the minority child. For the minority group child, hard work and extended effort may not only appear to be unrewarded but may in fact be unrewarded. The passive response to the school environment may in fact be a withdrawal from that unrewarding environment to a very active participation in the more rewarding street life of the ghetto.

At some level, it is an intuitive recognition of the power of the sense of control to influence achievement that disenchants those black parents whose children have been in white schools with integrated education as a substitute for quality education. The parents come to believe that the very presence of large numbers of white children who have a sense that they control their destinies in this society inhibits the sense of control in the black child. For the black child in the white class who would share in that sense of control cannot do so on black terms. The integrated setting, and especially the various suburban dispersal programs, always suggests to the black child that if he's going to make it, he's going to make it whitey's way. As long as the predominant value ethic in our society was that of the melting pot, each ethnic minority accepted the contract of making it the majority way by changing their names, learning "good" English, modifying family customs and relationships and becoming assimilated. Adherence to this tradition undergirds many of the feelings expressed by the erstwhile ethnic minorities now assimilated into the American mainstream: "We made it; why can't they?" There are many answers which can nearly all be subsumed under the history of racism in this country, a history that justified slavery on racial grounds and permitted each successive wave of white immigrants to "make it" in the system while withholding that opportunity to both the original settlers (Indians) and other early arrivals (black slaves). The opportunities to make it on white terms are still being extended to only a token few non-whites and the cost of assimilation is seen as too high by increasing numbers of young people of color, black, Indian, Mexican or Puerto-Rican.

Restricting ourselves to education, where is there any hope that remedies may be found? It seems clear that for urban school systems at least and soon for their metropolitan suburban neighbors, the problems are immediate and critical, if not already out of control and the search for remedies not an abstract matter at all.

Matching Environments to Persons

Let us return to a theme proposed at the beginning of this paper, a theme that concerns itself with the target for change in instances of a conflict between an individual and his social environment. Our society has a long philosophical and psychological tradition that fixates the problem in the individual and asserts that he bears the responsibility to change. From the Puritan ethic to psychoanalytic conceptions of personality, when relations between individual and environment have become disordered, it is assumed that the individual is at fault. Any yet it is very clear that, as persons, we all function in a variety of social environments. The

greater the discrepancy in what is expected of persons in the settings in which they take part, the greater the demands on their personal flexibility. Social scientists have become adept at naming and describing the phenomenon in terms of role conflict, role strain, identity crises, environmental stress, ego resiliency. These concepts reflect the difficulties individuals experience in meeting environmental demands and the place the distress with the individual not the environment. Partly in order to mitigate conflicting demands people began to minimize their differences. By voluntarily and largely unconsciously abandoning uniqueness, comfort and security was achieved by conformity. The risk of saying or doing the wrong thing is much reduced when everyone learns a limited range of things to say and do. From this orientation, the belief that ours is and should be an assimilationist, homogeneous society seems natural. Individual differences are to be de-emphasized and commonalities stressed. In everyday parlance, both the current slogan "America , love it or leave it" and the military "Shape up or ship out" are expressions of the belief that the burden of change is on the individual who does not fit.

Currently, whole groups of children, members of specifiable subcultures, are identified in school systems as having learning problems stemming from their difference from others in the wider community. Black children in white cities, Indians and Mexicans in the rural Southwest, French-Canadians in the Northeast, and poor children everywhere are classified as "problems" out of tune with the values and behavior patterns of the majority. Having one's difference singled out as a problem need not be based on group membership alone; there have been several recent court decisions in child custody disputes based on the judgment that one parent's life style was more in keeping with that of mainstream America and therefore better for the child than another's.

Judgments such as those described above usually stem from a view of social influence as operating in a unilateral way, sometimes stated in terms of the environment (read school) molding the child or a child's adjusting to a new school or a new teacher. The school as well as other environmental settings are assumed to be fixed and the individual flexible and adaptive. But this assumption reflects neither how things are nor how they should be. For in reality persons and environments engage in active mutual influence. For quite sometime, interaction and system dynamics have been noted and described even in the absence of tools and concepts that can specify what the interaction processes are. Increasingly, the need to study and deal with person and environment in the same context is being recognized (Cottrell, 1969; Helson, 1964) and some account is taken of the matching or fit between the person and the environment in which he functions at the moment. Anthropologists were among the first to comment on the consequences of undue descrepancies between individual characteristics and the cultural reward systems. In setting forth the concept of modal personality, Inkeles and Levinson (1969), for example, described the relation between personal and social requirements in terms of congruence. While perfect congruence is a logical possibility, in actuality societies vary only in the degrees of mismatch found. The authors distinguish between noncongruence that is "institutionally induced" and that which is "characterologically induced." When a ghetto

child is bussed to a suburban school, if the experience is seen from the child's point of view, the mismatch between him and the school environment is institutionally induced; it is the school environment that requires from him behavior other than he is used to giving. The noncongruence is characterologically induced if seen from the school's point of view; the bussed black children are so different in behavior that the system is strained to include them. While this concept of congruence is helpful, it again does little more than describe the phenomenon.

Consequences of Mismatch

The existence of different degrees of fit between persons and environments does not need further documentation. Instead, the consequences of match or mismatch for educational performance and satisfaction bear examination. Pervin (1968) in an excellent review cites a number of studies linking college dropout rates to the degree of match between the characteristics of the student and the school. In primary and secondary schools where there is virtually no choice on the part of the student or family and where attendance is compulsory, the consequences of mismatches are likely manifested in passivity or rebellion until the dropout age is reached. The student most likely to be affected is again the one whose behavior and values are most different from those of the community or of the school. Note once again that the presumed target of change and the actual implementer of change is the individual; he is the one to drop out when he and the environment are at odds. It is interesting to speculate that if current student pressures succeed in gaining a voice in the administration of higher education, it may be the institutions who are asked to change. We may find ourselves speaking in the future of the "dropout institution" or at least of major changes made by educational institutions that are markedly discrepant from the values and goals of the student population they serve. It is possible to see the demands by black parents for curriculum changes and for community control in this light. The resistance to institutional change should not be underestimated; few institutions accept, and even fewer act on, the assumption that where a mismatch exists between person and environment, the environment must show a capacity for flexibility and change. The belief that it is "natural" that the person should adapt and adjust is so pervasive that even perception of the nature of such mismatches is impaired. Schrag has pointed out at least one reason for the reluctance in school systems to accept responsibility for change:

> The schools of the city...are still run on a premise of success: failures are implicitly attributed to the child, to the community--to almost anything but the system itself. At the same time the system takes credit for motivating children, for interesting them in normal classroom activities, and for the long list of accomplishments with which history has always complimented public education. By not publishing data on performance...the schools can have it both ways. They can take credit for success and blame failure somewhere else (Schrag, 1967, p. 179).

If the issue is indeed one of blame avoidance, then the behavior is extremely short-sighted. School systems are faced as never before with criticism from within and without and much of the criticism is concentrated on the school system's capacity to teach children who are not, and perhaps increasingly do not wish to be, assimilated into dominant patterns and customs.

One Example of Strategy Based on Awareness of Mismatch

The program of intervention carried out by the Woodlawn Mental Health Center in cooperation with some of the schools in Chicago's black community can serve as an example of the beginnings of an approach along these lines (Schiff and Kellam, 1967). In an effort to develop a preventive program through the early identification of children with potential school behavior problems, teacher expectations were compared to pupil characteristics. In rating the "social field" of the classroom and school system, teacher expectations of what represented good and bad behavior were assessed. Through contacts with the families of children entering school, those children were identified whose background would prepare them least to meet teacher expectations and demands of the school system. Interventions at first grade focussed on the crises of school entry and the new adaptations required. Later interventions were designed with the help of parents and teachers to teach children the social skills and behaviors that the school system had defined as needed for success in the classroom.

The approach is a tentative move in the direction of acknowledging that too great a discrepancy between home and school expectations is disturbing to the child and predictive of future "mental health" problems. The child who learned one set of behaviors that worked for him in one setting and then finds that different behaviors, not in his repertoire, are expected in new surroundings faces a crises. It cannot be assumed that he will find it any easier to change and adapt than would the system itself. The conspicuous lack of success in educating the child who faces this problem indicates that the assumption that the person is the one who can make the adaptive change is not always true. The Woodlawn remedy is to focus special attention on teaching the necessary skills to the children who don't have them and indeed, some version of this orientation is the hallmark of all the compensatory and enrichment programs. As persons actively engaged in the educational process, we need to consider seriously what changes the school environment might make to accommodate itself to the ways of the "different" child. It can be argued that a number of changes and innovative programs have been implemented in the spirit of change and that these are now some of the very programs under attack by the parents of those for whom they were intended. In just these instances, careful attention should be directed at the values inherent in the programs in question. Do the programs reflect common values shared by the program developers and the program consumers or are the consumers faced with a conflict of values? Are the procedures and customs of the "special programs" as presently established really critical to quality education or are they dysfunctional

remnants of traditional operations? The question being asked in the black community and increasingly among other non-white minorities is: Can we have quality education without the white, middle-class values represented in integrated education? In the absence of readily available answers to that question, let us at least not remain inert and thereby answer the question by default.

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